



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
December 2-6, 2013

Aboriginal women one-third of all female prisoners (Report): Federal incarceration rates for aboriginal women up 84 per cent in the last 10 years

[CBC News](#)

Dec 02, 2013 5:03 PM CT



Aboriginal women one-third of female prisoners

Aboriginal women make up nearly 34 per cent of all female prisoners and are one of the fastest growing segments of the population in Canada's federal prisons, according to the annual report from Canada's correctional investigator.

The report says rates of federal incarceration for aboriginal women have increased nearly 84 per cent in the last 10 years. It notes contributing factors such as the effects of residential school and child welfare programs.

Chantal Genier, justice manager for the Council of Yukon First Nations, says those factors only scratch the surface.

"Housing, poverty, dislocation, in the sense of cultural identity, a disconnect, . . . frankly, these all lead to issues for the federal system to deal with," Genier said.

Even within the prison system, First Nations women face greater challenges than their non-First Nations counterparts.

They represent 75 per cent of self-injury incidents. They are also disproportionately represented in segregation units and maximum security and receive far lower rates of conditional release than non-First Nations inmates.

Katherine Alexander with the Elizabeth Fry society says the increase in the number of incarcerated women can affect whole communities.

"As soon as you separate someone from the community, you separate them from their supports, you separate them from gainful employment, you're separating them from housing, and when people are struggling with those things in the first place, all you're doing is creating a bigger divide," Alexander said.

Early portraits of B.C. First Nations and provincial officials go to auction

[Vancouver Sun](#)

December 1, 2013



Randy Shore

Possibly Glen House, a later residence of Moody in Swanwick.

A collection of photographs believed to have belonged to B.C.'s first lieutenant-governor, Richard Clement Moody, are being offered for auction by the British antiques dealer Bonhams in London.

The collection of albumen stills of Moody, his staff and his New Westminster home includes two

portraits of First Nations men that are among the earliest known photographs of B.C.'s indigenous people, according to the Bonhams lot description.

Then a professional photographer, the album's owner Jonathan Robbins bought the album at a sale of household items in Dorchester around 1973, as an example of early photography.

Robbins eventually linked the album to Moody after 40 years of research on surviving documents and letters from Moody's service in B.C. in museums and archives in Vancouver and Victoria, trying to make sense of the terse inscriptions on and around the images. Faces in the pictures match those in photographs from archival sources of Moody and his officer Captain Henry Luard.

Moody arrived in B.C. in 1858 in command of the Columbia detachment of the Royal Engineers, sent to bring order to a chaotic colony flooded with gold prospectors. He was appointed lieutenant-governor later that year.

Many of the photographs were likely taken by Lt. Arthur Reid Lempriere, who was in charge of photography for the local detachment of the Royal Engineers, sometime after his arrival in B.C. on April 12, 1859, according to Robbins's research.

Albumen photographs, which came into popular use in the 1850s, used a component of egg white to bind chemicals to paper, the first widely used photographic technology.

One image depicts a native man in portrait and a second image depicts Moody with another native man in the foreground. Other images include a group shot of the members of the Boundary Commission and staff employed by Moody's wife, Mary Susanna Hawks Moody. A photo of Moody's New Westminster home and another of the Hawks family home at Burfield Priory, Gloucestershire, strengthen the album's connection to Moody and his wife.

A photograph of a young woman is believed to be Lulu Sweet, a 16-year-old showgirl and actress who visited Victoria to perform and who toured the Fraser River with Moody. Moody named Lulu Island for her in 1862.

A pencil sketch of a house is signed "Crease," the surname of B.C.'s first attorney general Sir Henry Pering Pellew Crease, a lawyer, judge and influential early citizen of the colony. Crease and his family were known to have been friends and guests of the Moodys.

"My reason for selling is the historical importance of these prints in the context of the album as a whole and the insights they give into an important figure in both the history of the Royal Engineers, who were some of the earliest pioneers of photography and its importance in the history of B.C." said Robbins. "As such album deserves to be more widely accessible, available to other researchers and properly conserved."

The album is expected to sell for a price between \$3,000 and \$5,000. Lot 241 goes on sale December 4 in London.

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First Nations adults have more than double the risk of end-stage kidney disease

[Medical Xpress](#)

December 3, 2013

First Nations adults with diabetes have more than double the risk of end-stage kidney disease compared with non-First Nations adults, found a new study in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

Diabetes and [high blood pressure](#) are common causes of kidney disease, which can result in end-stage [renal disease](#) after years of slow decline in [kidney function](#).

To understand the high rates of end-stage renal disease in First Nations people, researchers looked at all cases of [diabetes](#) over 25 years (from 1980 to 2005) in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. There were 8254 First Nations patients with diabetes whose mean age at diagnosis was 47.2 years; in non-First Nations adults (82 175 people), diabetes was diagnosed at a much older age, with a mean age of 61.6 years. More than 82% of First Nations people had diabetes before age 60, whereas most non-First Nations (56%) were over age 60.

"Because they are younger than non-First Nations individuals when diabetes first develops, First Nations individuals are more likely to survive long enough for end-stage renal disease to occur, presumably because of lower cardiovascular mortality," writes Dr. Roland Dyck, a professor with the departments of Community Health and Epidemiology, and Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, with coauthors.

End-stage renal disease occurred in 2.4% (200) of First Nations people, and 18% (1482) died without end-stage renal disease. In comparison, only 0.7% of non-First Nations people had end-stage renal disease, and 34.6% (28 450) died from other diabetes-related complications. Men were 50% more likely than women to have end-stage renal disease.

"The implications of our findings are sobering," write the authors. "Among First Nations adults, type 2 diabetes is increasingly occurring during younger decades of life. Among First Nations children, the prevalence of diabetes tripled between 1980 and 2005, and the offspring of these individuals are in turn experiencing an even higher risk of childhood [type 2 diabetes](#). ...Without substantial improvements in the prevention and treatment of this disease, this pattern will likely translate into increasing numbers of First Nations people with diabetes-related end-stage renal disease and possibly other chronic diabetic complications."

The authors recommend focusing on prevention strategies to reduce the number of new cases of diabetes and to help delay the onset of diabetes.

"For clinicians and administrators, [the] data indicate that the risk of renal disease increases progressively with increasing age. With the onset of diabetes at a younger age among First Nations people, end-stage renal disease is thus a common outcome," writes Dr. Stephen McDonald, School of Medicine, University of Adelaide, Australia, in a linked commentary. "The challenge is not only to provide effective renal replacement therapy, but also to implement more effective primary prevention

initiatives to delay the onset of diabetes and the progression of chronic kidney disease."

In a related paper in *CMAJ*, Alberta researchers found that rates of [kidney disease](#) are two to three times higher in First Nations people than in non-First Nations people. However, the association of albuminuria—the secretion of the protein albumin in urine, which indicates kidney problems—is similar in both First Nations and non-First Nations people.

"Despite as higher prevalence of heavy albuminuria among First Nations people, we did not find that the presence or severity of albuminuria conferred an additional risk to the development of kidney failure," writes Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn, Department of Community Health Sciences, University of Calgary, with coauthors. "Even among participants with no measure of albuminuria, risk of progression to kidney failure was similarly elevated for First Nations compared with non-First Nations participants within each category of estimated GFR [glomerular filtration rate]."

Federal government seeks to appeal 60s scoop lawsuit

[CTV News](#)

December 1, 2013 11:33AM EST

Diana Mehta



TORONTO -- Marcia Brown Martel feels like she grew up alone.

After being taken by child welfare authorities from her aboriginal family and being adopted into a non-indigenous home, she lost her distinct language, traditions and ties to her community, resulting in a crushing sense of isolation.

The now-50-year-old says she wants to make sure no other child in Canada shares her experience, which is why she became the representative plaintiff in a class action lawsuit that claims a devastating loss of cultural identity was suffered by Ontario victims of the so-called "60s scoop."

Her hopes of having the lawsuit set a precedent, however, now lie with a judge who will hear arguments this week on whether the federal government should be allowed to appeal a court decision that gave the case the green light to proceed.

The lawsuit against the Canadian government refers to a period of time between the 1960s and the 1980s when thousands of aboriginal children were taken from their homes and placed with non-native families by child welfare services. None of its claims have been proven in court.

An Ontario court certified the case in July, but the federal government will ask Wednesday for leave to appeal that decision.

Martel finds the government's attempts at fighting the case frustrating.

"This is to change how Canada addresses its children," she said of the lawsuit. "When Canada chooses to appeal...they are appealing a fact of history."

According to its notice asking for leave to appeal, the government argued "there appears to be good reason to doubt the correctness" of the court order which certified the lawsuit as a class action.

Among its arguments, it said the judge erred "in improperly conflating the allegedly protected interest of cultural or aboriginal identity and the plaintiffs' claim for compensation for physical and psychological harm."

Martel was taken by child welfare services from her home on an Ontario First Nations reserve as a young child. She was adopted into a non-indigenous family at the age of nine, at which point her aboriginal name was changed.

"I lost my language, I lost my ability to communicate with my elders, I lost a lot," said the woman who only found out years later that a federal register listed her as deceased under the name she had been born with.

Martel cut ties with her adoptive family after she turned 18 and eventually returned to the reserve where she had been born. After years of slow and often painful re-integration, she is now the chief of the Beaverhouse First Nation in northern Ontario's Kirkland Lake region.

"I was an outsider. Those people didn't know me," she said. "I worked my way into the hearts of the community, one person at a time."

Throughout her childhood, Martel wasn't given much of an explanation about why she was no longer with her biological family.

"'Aboriginal people were always drinking and they couldn't look after their children anymore' -- that's what I was told," she said. "When I was about 12 I kind of wondered how is it possible that thousands of aboriginal people with families across the country could not look after their children anymore, how did that happen in one generation?"

The period covered by the suit stretches from December 1965 -- when the federal government signed an agreement with Ontario known as the Canada-Ontario Welfare Services Agreement -- until December 1984, when aboriginality was made

an important factor in child protection and placement practices through the Child and Family Services Act.

In a written decision from Ontario's Superior Court of Justice which certified the lawsuit, a judge said the federal government was wrong to argue that the 60s scoop could not be questioned or challenged because all placement of children followed orders from courts that were supposed to act in the children's best interests.

"The plaintiffs are not challenging the actual court decisions that allowed the aboriginal children to be placed in non-aboriginal homes. There is no collateral attack in this proposed class action on the judicial decisions," wrote Justice Edward Belobaba.

"The plaintiffs are alleging that the Federal Crown had a duty or responsibility to protect and preserve the Indian children's culture and identity both when entering into the 1965 Agreement, and after the children were placed in the non-aboriginal homes, and failed to do so."

In certifying the suit, Belobaba narrowed the definition of those who could join the proceedings to children taken from Indian reserves in Ontario who were placed in non-aboriginal homes where they were not raised with aboriginal customs.

The lawsuit is being hailed by the plaintiffs' lawyer as a landmark case.

"A lost generation of children of the 60s scoop means children who lost their identities, lost connection with their culture, with their traditions, with their language," said Jeffery Wilson.

"It's important not only for First Nations children, it's important for children of all peoples all around the world that there should not be political solutions or expedient solutions that result in the loss of cultural identity for children....The issue is this should not ever happen again. These people have suffered remarkable pain."

The case has been working its way through the courts for over three years.

Plaintiffs asked for permission to put the case forward as a class action in February 2009, but the federal government successfully appealed certification of the proceedings, largely on a procedural point. A new hearing was then ordered in January this year. In July, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice certified the case after dismissing a Crown motion asking for the suit to be quashed.

If the government is granted leave to appeal after this week's hearing, Wilson said the case will enter another round of legal wrangling which will likely run well into 2015.

"We're spending a lot of taxpayer dollars and a lot of time on procedural points when Canada indicated at court that they regretted what happened and so the larger issue is why aren't the parties sitting down and attempting to resolve this issue," he said. "It is slow or frustrating for a lot of the potential claimants."

First Nations University looks to plot course for the future: "Strategic plan" focuses on recruitment, retention, fiscal issues

[News Talk 650](#)

December 2, 2013

Adriana Christianson



First Nations University of Canada. Photo by Adriana Christianson/News Talk Radio

The First Nations University of Canada (FNUC) is hoping to turn over a new leaf, thanks to a long-term plan that will set the future of the school.

On Tuesday a new officially strategic plan for the school's future was released. It sets goals for the future of recruitment, retention and financial responsibility at FNUC.

"We're in a period of I think stability and growth and that's a lot different than where we were two years ago," said the school's acting President Juliano Tupone, who is also serving as vice-president of finance. He was referring to a controversy over management that caused the provincial and federal government to briefly pull funding to the institution.

Tupone said that, to his knowledge, this is the first time the university has had a strategic plan that sets out specific goals and how to meet them. One short-term goal for the administration is to regain control over the finances for the school, which are currently under the direction of an outside administrator.

"Hopefully next year to do away with that and have control of our finances back at the university with continued oversight and management by the University of Regina," Tupone said.

He explained that the school administration has done a lot of work to create consistent policies for staffing and managing resources, for example ensuring that courses are financially viable. A plan to recruit more students across the province by

offering more community-based programs on or near rural and northern reserves should help boost enrollment and help out the bottom line.

"We need to take programming and education out to communities wherever we can, wherever it's fiscally possible," Tupone said. "It's difficult for students to leave their communities to gain an education so we've seen a high demand for community-based programs."

FNUC recently hired a program coordinator to make connections with students on rural and northern reserves and to figure out what resources would be required to make those programs a reality. One example is the Bachelor of Indigenous Education program, which is being offered in partnership with Parkland Regional College in Fort Qu'Appelle.

"We're running some arts and sciences first year courses out on Onion Lake Cree Nation near Lloydminster. We're finishing up a bachelor of indigenous education in Black Lake Saskatchewan in the far north and we recently in September started a program out in Piapot First Nation."

Out of 750 full-time students enrolled with FNUC 100 are taking courses through community-based programs. Tupone hopes to see enrollment in those programs double by next year.

In the past year total enrollment increased by 15 per cent. Tupone believes it's quite possible to grow by that many students again next year.

The institution is also concentrating efforts on outreach for students as young as 12 to encourage them to think about post-secondary education.

Aboriginal foster kids to now be referred to native-specific services: Historic agreement for Native Women's Shelter

[CTV Montreal](#)

Published Monday, December 2, 2013 9:12PM EST



The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal has signed a new partnership deal. Tania Krywiak reports.

MONTREAL -- Calling it a historic agreement, the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal has signed a new partnership to help bridge the cultural gap often felt by the city's many aboriginal kids in foster care.

As many as a third of English-speaking children in foster care on the island of Montreal are from native communities.

The new agreement, made with the Batshaw Youth and Family Centres, will ensure those children are referred to aboriginally-run local organizations and groups – be it daycares, youth groups or social services, to help them retain a sense of their culture.

"These children can grow up with a lack of sense of identity and that can lead to so many different issues," said Native Women's Shelter executive director Nakuset, who has been pushing for this agreement for some time. "A sense of not knowing where they belong, a loss of language, a loss of culture. It's really compounded."

This can in part lead to why so many aboriginal children end up foster care – because children of the system can become parents riddled with their own issues.

"They themselves were in foster care and now their children are in foster and the number is growing," she said.

Part of the issue is many foster parents and social service do not understand the cultural heritage, making it that much tougher for the families to teach the children about their heritage.

Margaret Douek, executive director of Batshaw Youth and Family Services said out of the 300 English-speaking children in foster care on the island of Montreal, 100 of them are from aboriginal.

The key is understanding how best to help them by pairing up with an organization who understands their backgrounds and knows which resources would best serve them, she said.

"Becoming aware of maintaining a heritage and ties with cultural communities and understanding the distinction in the different communities (is important). It's not one group. There are many different groups that we are serving," she said.

Harper Government moves forward with Devolution in the Northwest Territories

[Canada NewsWire](#)

December 3, 2013



Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Bernard Valcourt, and Northwest Territories Premier, Bob McLeod, together in the Foyer of the House of Commons after the introduction of Bill C-15, the Northwest Territories Devolution Act. (CNW Group/Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada)

Today, the Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, introduced Bill C-15, [Northwest Territories Devolution Act](#), in the House of Commons. This bill delivers on the Harper Government's commitment to give the people of the North a greater say in their own affairs.

"Our Government has made the [Northern Strategy](#) a priority and today's historic tabling of the Northwest Territories Devolution Act is another example of our commitment to improving and devolving northern governance," stated Minister Valcourt. "With this legislation, we are giving Northerners greater control over their lands and resources, while unlocking the economic potential of the region, and ensuring that the Northwest Territories remains an attractive place to live, work and invest."

"Devolution is an historic step in the political and economic development of the Northwest Territories," said the Honourable Bob McLeod, Premier of the Government of the Northwest Territories. "It has been a long-term priority for the people and Legislative Assembly of the NWT and will help ensure NWT residents benefit from the responsible development of the North's great resource potential. Devolution will help transform the Northwest Territories economy and create jobs and opportunities for our residents and all Canadians, especially if it is supported by an efficient and effective regulatory system that promotes investment while ensuring resource development occurs sustainably."

The Northwest Territories Devolution Act responds to calls from territorial governments, Aboriginal groups and industry to place decision-making in the hands of Northerners. [The Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement](#) was [signed on June 25, 2013](#). Today's introduction of legislation reinforces the Government's commitment to completing devolution by the targeted effective date of April 1, 2014.

[Devolution in the NWT](#) will mean the transfer of decision-making and administration for land and resource management from the Government of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories. The territorial government will become responsible for the management of onshore lands and the issuance of rights and interests with respect to onshore minerals and oil and gas. It will also give them the power to collect and share in resource revenues generated in the territory.

The bill also introduces important improvements to the regulatory process including more predictable, timely environmental reviews of resource development projects, reduced regulatory burden and duplication, and improved environmental protection.

"The 2010 Action Plan and subsequent amendments to legislation and devolution to the GNWT contribute to creating better government for the citizens of the NWT and strengthening the government and economy of Canada as a whole," said Harry Deneron, Chief of Acho Dene Koe First Nation.

The Government of Canada continues to advance the Northern Strategy thanks to the contributions of many partners, including Aboriginal organizations, First Nation and Inuit communities, industry and the Government of the Northwest Territories. The North remains a key priority for the Government.

Backgrounder - [Bill C-15, Northwest Territories Devolution Act](#)

Backgrounder - [Northwest Territories Devolution](#)

Frequently Asked Questions - [Bill C-15, Northwest Territories Devolution Act](#)

This release is also available on the Internet at www.aandc.gc.ca.

SOURCE Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

Treaty 8 criticizes B.C. Hydro's Integrated Resource Plan

[Energetic City](#)

December 3, 2013



Treaty 8 Tribal Chief Liz Logan Motion Media

The Treaty 8 Tribal Association is again speaking out against B.C Hydro's consultation process, this time over its recently released Integrated Resource Plan. The document provides a look at the utility's plans for rates and infrastructure over the next 10 years to meet the province's growing demand for energy.

However, Treaty 8 Tribal Chief Liz Logan argues Hydro is ignoring input from stakeholders like First Nations.

"To be frank, we aren't surprised by BC Hydro's old school approach to what they call consultation, we have experienced it ourselves through the lack of consideration in the IRP process and the dismissive nature of discussions on Site C, a project we oppose," she says in a release. "It has become strikingly obvious to us that the crown's commitment to engaging First Nations and the public for that matter, is nothing more than window-dressing and in today's age of expectations of transparency and inclusive planning processes, they have fallen far short of the mark."

Among the issues Treaty 8 has found with the IRP are that it was not independently reviewed before being approved by the province, it does not acknowledge cumulative impacts on areas like the Peace Region, and that it does not provide for the capacity needed the projected energy surplus. Instead, Logan argues upgrading existing facilities, conservation, and shifting the load of industrial customers can provide the necessary capacity.

Also on Treaty 8's list of concerns are a lack of comparison of rates to those of alternative energy and capacity options, and a "dismissal" of First Nations concerns.

"Given all British Columbians will be impacted financially, environmentally and socially by the choices presented in this plan, B.C. Hydro's "trust us" approach should raise red flags for all ratepayers," Logan adds. "The energy system of the future should represent the values of the public it serves and provide long-term opportunities and benefits to not only First Nations but also the communities that proposed projects will impact."

Hydro's Integrated Resource Plan was accepted by the B.C. government on November 26.

For Native Women, the Highway of Tears Cuts Right Across Canada

[Huffington Post](#)

December 3, 2013

Cutting through northern British Columbia is a notorious stretch of highway. Along what is now [widely known](#) as the Highway of Tears, a staggering number of First Nation women have been murdered or gone missing. For many First Nations women, however, the Highway of Tears just keeps going, shearing its way across the country through our small towns and inner cities, bringing with it sexual exploitation and violence.

Where I work in Toronto's Moss Park, I see many homeless women working in the sex trade. They walk down the middle of the road, knocking on the windows of drivers waiting for the light to change. Sometimes they're under-dressed for the cold, leaving them shivering on the street corners. They come from poverty and despair, drifting into the city to live under very precarious and often dangerous conditions. Some are Aboriginal women who for myriad reasons left impoverished northern reserves to try their luck down in the city, only to be caught up in a merciless cycle of poverty and exploitation.

All of the women who end up working the streets have a story. But the story of many Aboriginal women begins long before anyone of them was ever born, as if the Highway of Tears also extends back through time, linking the exploitation of the women huddled at the corner of the street with the historical victimization of Aboriginal women. The book *Clearing the Plains*, by James Daschuk, has recently gained attention for its analysis of how the federal government used starvation as a political tactic to break the independence of the western Plains tribes. But what is often overlooked is Daschuk's disturbing analysis of the rise of forced prostitution and sexual abuse among First Nation communities dating back to the 19th century.

Daschuk points out that in the late 1800s, Aboriginal children were taken by government officials from their families and were "left a prey to the seductions of men revoltingly immoral." He further talks about the domino devastations of starvation and exploitation as First Nation communities saw that "their young women were now reduced by starvation and prostitution, a thing unheard of among their people before." Daschuk shows us that the sexual exploitation of First Nation women was created, in large part, by the bureaucratic pressures brought to bear on these communities to force them into submission within the reserve system.

Such was the beginning of the Highway of Tears. Some 130 years later, the Highway still pushes itself mercilessly from the west coast, then across the Prairies, to run the length of this country. According to a recent report on the Aboriginal sex trade in the Great Lakes region, Aboriginal women and children are being trafficked between Minnesota and Canada (primarily through Thunder Bay). Women who had engaged in survival sex [reported](#) that they had been "racially and sexually harassed by police officers..." and this alienation likely leaves them even more vulnerable to violence.

Police in Thunder Bay have said they were [unaware of prostitution](#) in the Great Lakes. This is the same police force that has had human rights [complaints](#) filed against them for racism, has been the [target](#) of several complaints of misconduct, and that so badly [handled](#) a case of racial sexual assault against an Aboriginal women that Anonymous got involved.

Sex workers cannot escape sex trafficking and forced prostitution if police departments refuse to treat them with respect. But as we have seen from young

aboriginal women in other parts of the country, there is a systemic disinterest in the conditions being faced by young and poor First Nation women. In the official inquiry into the police handling of the notorious Pickton serial killings, Justice Oppal concluded: "The women were poor -- they were addicted, vulnerable, Aboriginal. They did not receive equal treatment by police. As a group, they were dismissed.... These women were vulnerable; they were treated as throwaways."

This is not to blame only the police. The problem cuts to the very core of Canada's long standing, abusive relationship with First Nation people. On the front lines of inner cities, there needs to be active measures in place to stop trafficking and prosecute human traffickers, while at the same time providing safe, non-judgemental services to women trying to escape sex work. Women are more vulnerable on the streets; a homeless woman is 10 times more likely to be assaulted than a homeless man.

Not surprisingly though, there is an acute lack of front-line services, particularly at night, for homeless women. In Moss Park, one of the poorest and most violent neighbourhoods in Canada, there are few shelter beds available for women. There are no safe shelters in Toronto for homeless women who are under in the influence. The woman who was sexually assaulted twice in one night while sleeping on the street at Dundas and Sherbourne is a very real and graphic reminder of how brutal life can be on Canadian streets. It is unconscionable.

And so while our cities need more shelters and services for this vulnerable group of women, the long term solution cannot simply be found on the front lines, there needs to be a systematic response to the conditions that have created generations of poor and "disposable" women from Canada's reserve system. The young women walking on Toronto's Sherbourne Street, and the streets of other inner cities across our country inherited a system of abuse that began with the clearing of the plains and continues today. They deserve a better fate than to end up dying on the Highway of Tears.

Musqueam in contention for 2013 Newsmaker

[Vancouver Courier](#)

December 3, 2013 09:27 AM

Mike Howell



National Assembly of First Nations Chief Shawn Atleo (r) visited the Marpole Village burial site during the Musqueam protests there in May. file photo Dan Toulgoet

The Musqueam Indian Band got some good news and some sad news this year.

First, the good news: After more than two years of protest and subsequent negotiations, the

band became the [owner of a one-acre piece of property](#) in Marpole. The land was at the centre of a lengthy dispute that involved the discovery of ancestral remains on a site planned for a condominium complex.

The bad news: Longtime chief, Ernie Campbell, who [chose not to seek another term](#) last year after a combined 14 years at the helm, [died in October](#) from complications related to diabetes. He was 72.

Those two events coupled with Campbell's son-in-law, [Wayne Sparrow](#), leading the band in his first year as chief and the Musqueam's participation in [Truth and Reconciliation ceremonies](#), made for a memorable year for the band.

It is why the *Courier* has chosen the Musqueam Indian Band, whose main reserve in South Vancouver has seen the recent development of a community centre and cultural centre, as a candidate for Newsmaker of the Year.

The [land in question](#) in Marpole involved property owners Gary and Fran Hackett and Century Group HQ Developments Ltd. The Hacketts, a retired couple from Saanich, were equal partners with Century Group and planned to build a 108-unit condominium complex in the 1300-block Southwest Marine Drive.

The owners acquired all the necessary city and government permits to go ahead with the project. But the Hacketts and Hodgins agreed to stop work on the property in early 2011 after archeologists discovered human remains of two adults and two infants, which the Musqueam believed to be their ancestors.

The discovery led to the band engaging in a lengthy protest outside the property, which included members shutting down the Arthur Laing Bridge during a morning rush hour. Grand Chief Shawn Atleo, [Mayor Gregor Robertson](#) and NDP leader Adrian Dix supported the band's fight for the land.

The case was significant for Vancouver and the rest of the province because it pitted a First Nation's beliefs against the rights of private property owners.

The provincial government declined to intervene but promised the Musqueam at least \$4.8 million to help resolve the land dispute with the property owners. The money was owed to the band as per a previous agreement related to the government's South Fraser Perimeter Road project in Delta and Surrey, which falls on traditional Musqueam lands.

In December 2012, the property owners allowed the band to bury the remains on the property. Eventually, in October of this year, the band reached a deal with the owners to buy the land, which the Musqueam plan to turn into a memorial park. Details of the deal were not disclosed.

A few weeks after the Musqueam celebrated the deal, the band was in mourning after Campbell died in hospital. A [ceremony to mark his death](#) was held in the band's community centre, which members said was a good example of the progress Campbell brought to the Musqueam people.

Campbell was chief during the 2010 Winter Olympics and negotiated a deal with governments that ensured economic, social and cultural benefits from the Games. The former chief also negotiated a landmark agreement in 2008 that saw the provincial government turn over the University of B.C. Golf Course lands, property near Sea Island Way in Richmond and two parcels in [Pacific Spirit Regional Park](#). The deal included a payment of \$20.3 million.

"To get those chunks of land back was quite an accomplishment for our community," said Sparrow, who was elected chief last December.

The *Vancouver Courier's* Newsmaker of the Year will be announced Dec. 11. To participate in our Newsmaker of the Year Reader's Choice vote, go to the web poll at [vancourier.com](#), email your vote at letters@vancourier.com or write to 1574 West Sixth Ave., Vancouver, V6J 1R2. You can also make your vote known on Twitter at [#VanNewsmaker](#) or [The Vancouver Courier Newspaper on Facebook](#).

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Santa to deliver to northern First Nations with help from MKO

[Canada First Perspective](#)

03 December 2013 20:19



By Trevor Greyeyes. Even Santa needs a little help now and then.

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Grand Chief David Harper announced the kick off of the 2013 MKO Santa Express that will help Santa deliver gifts and good cheer to remote northern First Nation communities.

The MKO Santa Express is an annual event and with the support of corporate sponsors and business partners MKO was able to raise almost \$100,000 annually to provide children living in remote isolated communities across

Manitoba the opportunity to see Santa Claus and receive a gift bag over the holiday season.

As the media gathered, MKO Grand Chief Harper thanked Custom Helicopters, RBC, MTS and Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo for their help and donations.

"This is really for the kids," said Atleo. "When they see their kids being greeted by Santa it's priceless."

Harper thanked Kevin Carlson and David Spence for starting off and organizing the original MKO Santa Express and for their continued work.

"I will never forget that we did 16 communities that first day from 5 am til sometime after midnight," said Harper.

He pointed out Dotty and Winona have packadged countless presents and items for the express.



Politicians pose with Santa before news conference.

NDP MP releases song about John A. Macdonald's treatment of aborigines

[Globe and Mail](#)

Dec. 03 2013, 4:04 PM EST



NDP MP Charlie Angus, the party's ethics critic, holds a news conference in Ottawa Monday May 20, 2013. (FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Charlie Angus says there were no spoken words to adequately express his reaction to a new book that outlines Sir John A. Macdonald's efforts to starve First Nations off the plains to make way for a national railway. So the

New Democrat MP from Timmins, Ont., who is also a professional musician, wrote a song. [Four Horses](#), which was released Tuesday in conjunction with his new album, Great Divide, is a tribute to *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics, Starvation, and the*

Loss of Aboriginal Life, a critically acclaimed book by Saskatchewan university professor [James Daschuk](#).

"This book completely blew everything I thought I knew about Canada away," Mr. Angus said in a telephone interview. "What this book really shows is the poison in the relations that went wrong" between First Nations people and the government.

Clearing the Plains outlines Macdonald's plan to "starve unco-operative Indians onto reserves and into submission." It explains the devastating effect that his policies had on First Nations after the bison herds collapsed due to overhunting.

According to the book, the First Nations thought their treaty with the government would provide them with food but, instead, whole communities were starved until they succumbed to disease.

The song and the book, which made The Globe and Mail's list 100 top reads of the year, come as the federal Conservative government prepares for a year-long celebration in 2015 of the bicentennial of Macdonald's birth.

Mr. Angus said there is much to celebrate about Macdonald and his role as the founding father of Canada.

But Canadians also need to come to terms with "the policies that tried to destroy a people. And Mr. Macdonald has been able to escape all that because we write our history as boring, that all our people were well-meaning and boring," said Mr. Angus who hopes the song will help young First Nations activists better understand what happened to their people.

"Sir John A. was not just prime minister," he said. "He assumed the role of Indian affairs minister. People who made efforts to alleviate the famine, people who tried to hold on to the treaty, were replaced by yes men, by bureaucrats who cut off medical support."

Mr. Angus said Canadian school children are taught that when the Sioux, who were being murdered by U.S. troopers, crossed the so-called "Medicine Line" marking the western border between Canada and the United States, they met good governance and concern in Canada. But the book makes it clear that was not the case, he said.

"So that's the whole line of the song: Forget what you were taught about the Medicine Line," said Mr. Angus. "This book completely blew my mind and I really felt that, as a politician, words are so devalued in the way we talk now, that the only way I could put something together was in a song."

Mr. Daschuk who, like Mr. Angus, is from Timmins, said he is humbled and honoured by the song.

"I didn't set out to attack John A. Macdonald," said Mr. Daschuk. But the health of the plains First Nations started to deteriorate within two years of the signing of the treaty. It was "the ethnic cleansing of indigenous people from western Saskatchewan," he said. "It got them out of the way of the railway."

Canadian First Nations chief lays blame on Alaska catch for low Yukon salmon runs

[Alaska Dispatch](#)

December 3, 2013

Preliminary data indicates the 2012 Chinook salmon run on the Yukon River was the worst ever.

The International Yukon River Panel is meeting in Whitehorse, the capital city of Canada's Yukon territory, this week to plan a management strategy for 2014. Federal Fisheries officials who represent Canada at the talks refuse to say how they plan to address the issue.

Closed-door meetings were held Sunday and continued Monday with a public session beginning Tuesday.

Yukon First Nation leaders are calling on the Americans to meet their obligations under the Pacific Salmon treaty.

It guarantees at least 40,000 Yukon River salmon will reach Canada, but that's only happened twice in the last seven years.

Yukon River Chinook, or kings as they're called in Alaska, are considered by some to be the world's tastiest salmon, but their dwindling numbers suggest they could soon be the world's rarest.

The international treaty aimed at managing fisheries, and ensuring a fair return of fish to Canada, has failed miserably according to Yukon First Nations.

The chief of the Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Carl Sidney, is a former panel member. He's calling on Canadian authorities to get tough with the Americans.

"Holding the United States government feet to the fire, virtually trying to get them to uphold their end of the bargain, and at this time they don't really seem too concerned about it," Sidney said.

Teslin Tlingit leaders are calling for an international ban on Chinook salmon fishing in the Yukon River until stocks recover. Other Yukon First Nations have also expressed their unhappiness about the salmon run to federal officials.

Alaska managers counter they've already begun making big cuts to the annual harvest.

This story is posted on Alaska Dispatch as part of [Eye on the Arctic](#), a collaborative partnership between public and private circumpolar media organizations.

Showing opposition to First Nations Education Act

[Chatham Daily News](#)

December 3, 2013 4:42:31 EST PM

Ellwood Shreve



Greg Peters, Chief of Delaware First Nation and chair of the London District Chief's Council

First Nations communities across Ontario will be sending a message to the federal government on Wednesday about its proposed First Nations Education Act.

"If we have nothing else to fight with, but to raise our voices,

we're certainly going to raise our voices," said Greg Peters, Chief of Delaware First Nation and chair of the London District Chief's Council, of the Unity Rally planned in front of the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development offices in Toronto.

A major concern, said Peters, has been the lack of consultation with First Nations in developing the proposed First Nations Education Act (FNEA).

He said any FNEA needs to take into account the diverse cultural traditions and languages of First Nations, adding there is nothing mentioned about culture and language in this proposal.

He noted the proposed FNEA fails to recognize First Nation's inherent right to exercise jurisdiction over their own education systems.

"It is our responsibility to educate our children in ways that reinforce our worldview, our languages, our ways – something we have done long before the imposition of federal control over our lives," Peters said.

Another major issue, he said, is the lack of adequate funding.

"Our children who attend school on-reserve receive substantially less funding provided to non-First Nations students attending provincial schools," Peters said.

He noted the inadequate funding directly correlates to lower student success.

Peters cited as an example, more funding would help First Nations communities hold on to more skilled teachers.

"A lot of times we get the teachers that are right out of school," he said. "They come into our communities and get some experience, and the first chance they have to leave, they leave, because they can make more money somewhere else."

Peters said from residential schools to chronically under-funded on-reserve schools, "our graduation rates are typically about half the national average, so it's easy to see that federal control over First Nations education simply doesn't work."

He added, "I really believe, given the opportunity, that we could design a system that could operate better than just saying go under the provincial system."

Similar rallies are being held in Brantford, Sudbury and Thunder Bay on Wednesday.

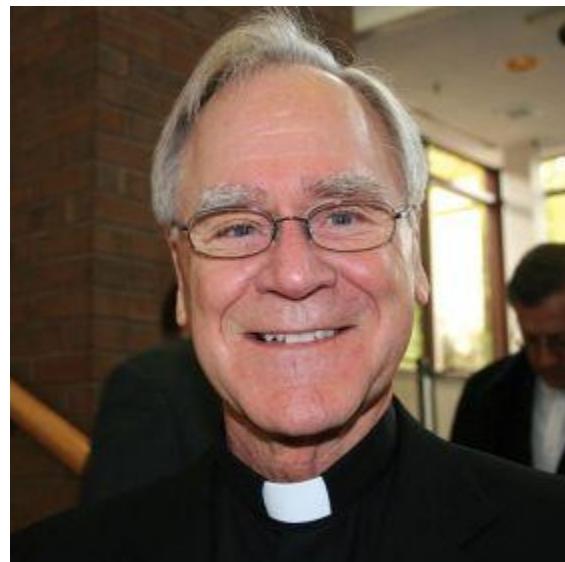
"We're just trying to send a strong message that this is inadequate legislation," Peters said.

Moving forward on native reconciliation

[The Catholic Register](#)

04 December 2013 13:21

Michael Swan



Archbishop James Weisgerber

Money can't buy you love, or justice, or reconciliation. But sometimes money is the necessary first step.

The Moving Forward Together Campaign is asking Catholics across Canada to take that first step toward a new relationship between the Church and aboriginal Canadians. On Dec. 7-8 the campaign will distribute collection envelopes in the parishes of 10 dioceses from Vancouver to Halifax-Yarmouth. The campaign is looking for funds to support programs helping

young native Canadians get a leg up in their education, help aboriginal families stay together and bring native and non-native communities together to pray and share.

The parish collections are one small part of the residential schools settlement. The courts had asked the Church to make its best efforts to collect \$25 million for healing and reconciliation programs over five years. Moving Forward Together was set up with co-chairs Archbishop James Weisgerber, former Assembly of First Nations national Chief Phil Fontaine and Sr. Donna Geernaert representing Canada's religious orders.

The fundraising campaign has not gone well and there's no expectation that a weekend of parish collections is going to make up the difference. After an early attempt to raise money and support in corporate Canada fell flat, the Moving Forward Together Campaign has retooled to concentrate on supporting local, community-based efforts across Canada to build up native communities and promote reconciliation with non-native Catholics.

"As a country, we're one people," explains Weisgerber. "For Catholics, we believe in even a deeper connection between people. But even just the Canadian connection means that everybody has to get an opportunity to move ahead."

Canada's 1.3 million aboriginal people are younger than the rest of the country. Half the aboriginal population is younger than 27 as opposed to a median age of 40 for the rest of Canada. They're also poorer. In the 2006 census, median income for aboriginal Canadians was 30-per-cent below the national figure. And they struggle to get a viable education. As of 2008 Statistics Canada reports that 34 per cent of aboriginal Canadians between the ages of 25 and 64 had less than a high school diploma, compared to 15 per cent of the non-aboriginal population.

The situation comes out of a long history that includes the terrors and trauma of the residential school system, Weisgerber told *The Catholic Register*.

"But the larger part has simply been colonization. We didn't share very well," he said.

Repairing that damage means making special efforts, said Moving Forward Together co-ordinator Gerry Kelly. But beyond the money, it means getting dioceses, parishes and individual Catholics involved in reconciliation.

To that end Moving Forward Together is encouraging dioceses to come up with their own projects.

"We're really interested at this level of the campaign in letting people do what they want to do rather than creating a list of obligations and asking people to sign up for them," Kelly said.

Those diocese-by-diocese efforts have included scholarships at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Montreal's Concordia University, the Kateri Native Ministry in

Ottawa, Returning to the Spirit programs across Canada and the Talitha Cum Society helping native women in Vancouver's downtown lower east side.

The bulk of the projects are aimed at off-reserve natives, where today the majority of aboriginal people live.

"It's a concrete opportunity for reaching out. People recognize there's a huge challenge here. Often we don't have anything we can do about it, but here's a very specific thing that we can do," said Weisgerber.

"If anybody should be able to do it, it's the Church. Because we believe we're brothers and sisters."

Over nearly five years Moving Forward Together raised \$3.5 million from religious communities and dioceses. While the collection this second Sunday of Advent isn't going to close the gap with the \$25-million goal, it's an opportunity to get ordinary Canadian Catholics involved.

"While it's a legal obligation, we can show good will," said Weisgerber. "Good will can go a long way toward attracting other people, then committing ourselves more."

NDP to unveil energy plan focused on sustainability, First Nations partnerships

[Montreal Gazette](#)

December 3, 2013

Tobi Cohen



The energy platform NDP Leader Tom Mulcair will unveil Wednesday is expected to overhaul and strengthen the environmental assessment regime many critics and environmental activists accused the Conservative government of gutting in last year's budget. Photograph by: Adrian Wyld/THE CANADIAN PRESS/File, Postmedia News

OTTAWA — The NDP will roll out details of its "pan-Canadian" energy plan Wednesday — a plan focused on sustainability,

partnerships with provinces and First Nations communities and long-term prosperity, Postmedia News has learned.

Leader [Tom Mulcair](#) is expected to announce plans to overhaul and strengthen the environmental assessment regime many critics and environmental activists accused the government of gutting in last year's budget. The NDP would ultimately overturn cabinet's ability to unilaterally ignore the outcome of an assessment. Critics fear the new rule would give the government the power to approve a pipeline, for example, even if the project fails to meet environmental standards.

He will also announce the NDP's intent to bring back the ecoenergy home retrofit program introduced by the Conservatives in 2007. The program, which ended last year, provided grants up to \$5,000 to help homeowners increase energy efficiency. Mulcair will also speak about investing in renewable wind, solar and geothermal energy in a bid to create 20,000 new jobs in Canada, and in rail, tanker and pipeline safety standards to encourage energy projects rather than stymie them due to disasters and protests.

He will also talk about the possibility of a national version of an initiative he introduced in Quebec when he was that province's environment minister. Quebec's Europe-inspired Sustainable Development Act, something Mulcair often talks about as his crowning achievement in provincial politics, affirms the government's commitment to the concept, which requires that economic, social and environmental impacts be taken into account before development decisions are made. The bill also made it a right under Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms to live in a healthy environment in which biodiversity is respected, and created a green fund to support provincial and municipal sustainable-development initiatives as well as provide stable funding to environmental groups.

Mulcair is expected to make the announcement during a speech to the Economic Club of Canada in Ottawa.

It follows a promise during the party's September caucus retreat in Saskatoon where he vowed to focus more on "proposition" — that is, on unveiling what the party would do if it formed the government — instead of just opposition.

At the time, he said the NDP would reveal details of a "pan-Canadian" energy plan in the fall, and while the Senate expense scandal that has dominated the fall agenda raised questions about whether the plan may be scuttled, natural resources critic Peter Julian has insisted it won't be.

"We're continuing on with the work of showing leadership and developing an energy strategy and to put out there some of the major elements that will be part of the conversation over the next year," said Julian, who was tasked with leading efforts to prepare the party's energy strategy, which has taken him across Canada and to Europe. Along with Mulcair, he's also visited a number of First Nations communities.

"Some of the things are things we've signalled already and others are new elements, but what it does is send a signal that in our opinion it's very important to have an adult conversation around energy issues," he added, noting that the Conservatives merely "condemn" those who raise questions about their "superficial approach," largely focused on exporting raw resources.

"We need to have an adult conversation about the future of Canada when it comes to our natural resources and our energy resources ... and I think that that adult conversation really gets launched (Wednesday)."

Here's a look at what Mulcair has said in the past on energy:

- He's against the Keystone XL pipeline. He says it's "not in Canada's best interest" because it would export raw bitumen and more than 40,000 Canadian jobs to the United States.
- He's against the Enbridge Northern Gateway project — a 1,177-kilometre pipeline that would transport 525,000 barrels of oil per day from near Edmonton to the port of Kitimat, B.C. From there, the product would be loaded onto supertankers and shipped to Asian markets.
- The NDP would prefer see product shipped to Quebec and Atlantic Canada through projects like [TransCanada](#)'s proposed Energy East pipeline which, Mulcair argues, would keep value-added jobs in Canada.
- Mulcair has softened his tone on Kinder Morgan's proposed twinning of the Trans Mountain Pipeline from Alberta to B.C. Former B.C. NDP leader Adrian Dix's decision midway through the election campaign to oppose the pipeline was considered a contributing factor in his party's loss.
- Mulcair does not support a carbon tax on fuels, but has called for a cap-and-trade emissions-reduction scheme based on a principle that "polluters pay." It's a system not unlike the one the Conservatives previously supported.
- He argues Alberta's oilsands are to blame for inflating the Canadian dollar and killing manufacturing jobs in Ontario. He calls it the "Dutch disease" and it's got him in hot water on a number of occasions.

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Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations offer \$25,000 reward for elk poachers

[Vancouver Sun](#)

December 3, 2013



A dead Elk is shown in this undated handout photo near Port Alberni, B.C.. A Vancouver Island First Nation is offering a \$25,000 reward for the prosecution of those conducting an illegal elk kill in its territory. Photograph by: Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation, THE CANADIAN PRESS

POR ALBERNI, B.C. — A group of Vancouver Island First Nations is offering a \$25,000 reward for the prosecution of those conducting an illegal elk kill in its territory.

The Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations say since April, at least eight elk have been found dead in the Port Alberni area.

Some of the carcasses have been abandoned, while others have been partially harvested, and four more appeared to have been professional butchered.

First Nations officials says the elk and other wildlife are not only valued for food, but are of great cultural significance.

Chief Jeff Cook of the Huu-ay-aht (Hoo-EYE-ut) Nation says they're completely opposed to the killing of elk for sport or fun and the fact that much of the animals were left behind troubles them.

About five years ago, a dozen elk were transplanted into the area to create a sustainable herd and First Nations had been on the verge of being able to hunt as many as four of the animals.

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First Nations call tanker safety announcement lip service: Want Ottawa to commit to all 45 recommendations from a tanker safety panel

[News 1130](#)

December 4, 2013 3:08 am

Sara Norman



VANCOUVER (NEWS1130) – An announcement from Ottawa it will only review findings from an independent panel on oil tanker safety isn't sitting well with BC's First Nations. Without the government's commitment to 45 changes, they're calling the panel a useless exercise.

Art Sterritt with Coastal First Nations says the government pushing for what they're calling a "world class tanker safety system" is just lip service without adopting recommendations like increasing Coast Guard resources and oil company liability.

"We get a lot of fancy language, we get people trying to convince the public that they're doing something better when the reality is they spin it, and then they put it back to bed, and we don't get anything better than what we had when we started this exercise," says Sterritt.

According to Sterritt a world class tanker safety system is not good enough for British Columbia, as it means we will still see spills, but won't be able to clean them up. "There is nothing on this planet, no technology, that this industry has put out there that can clean up a spill in coastal British Columbia."

Even if the government does increase liability, Sterritt isn't sure how they plan to chase down ships and hold them accountable in the event of an oilspill, when many ships fly what he calls flags of convenience and aren't easily traced.

Sterritt warns the Feds shouldn't be looking at transporting oil by water until they approve all recommendations in the report including an end to liability limits and increased resources for the coast guard.

Greenland Inuit village fights for survival

[Deutsche Welle](#)

December 5, 2013

Mark Brooks

When it comes to pulling together globally in battling climate change, some small island nations have to fight to get their voices heard. Many of them have been wrestling with the effects of climate change for years.



© DWM, Brooks

In the small Inuit community of Uummannaq on the northwest coast of Greenland, a 1,200-meter (3,937-foot), heart-shaped mountain forms a dramatic backdrop to a town of colorful houses that dot the rocky landscape. The climate can be unforgiving here with winter temperatures commonly reaching minus 30 degrees Celsius (-22 Fahrenheit). Fishing and hunting have been a way of life in Uummannaq since the town was established 250 years ago. But nowadays, as local fishermen prepare to set out for their daily catch, they have more than just the wind and weather conditions on their minds.

"In wintertime, the ice is a lot thinner than it used to be and a lot of the fishermen who fish in the ice water are unable to catch as much as we have in the past," said Maligiak, a 41-year-old Inuit fisherman. In recent years, he's noticed significant [environmental changes](#) that aren't just hindering the fishing industry, but they can

be dangerous too. "When the warm wind comes through, it melts everything very quickly and creates larger waves," he said. "Our small fishing vessels are not

designed for these big waves, which can damage our boats and equipment."



Maligiak says that climate change makes fishing more dangerous

Impacts of climate change

Located on a small island off the Greenland coast, 600 km (372 miles) north of the Arctic Circle,

Uummannaq is one of many Inuit communities in the North that are already experiencing the impacts of climate change. Not only is the massive Greenlandic ice sheet [melting](#), sea ice is starting to disappear too.

"The sea ice in Uummannaq now melts two months earlier than it did only a few years ago and the whole year the ice is thinner than it used to be, so it's really dangerous to go out," Maligiak added.

Adapt to survive

Local residents gathered this year outside of Uummannaq city hall to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the town's founding. The whole community of 1,300 people joined in.

One of the locals was Rene Christensen, who has been living in Uummannaq for 13 years. Originally from Denmark, Rene works as an educator and therapist at a children's home in town. He said he is seeing more and more families facing difficulties in the fishing industry. "Most of the economy in Uummannaq is based on fishing and to be able to go out fishing, they need stable weather and in the winter, they need solid ice cover."



The people of Uummannaq are trying to adapt in order to survive

But as the climate has changed over the past 10 to 15 years, there are sometimes periods when ice conditions are very poor and it's too difficult for fishing. A lot of families whose incomes come

from fishing have no or very little money, and then have to go on social welfare. "We've seen problems in the last 10 years where families are actually starving," said Christensen, describing the tense situation.

Fishing in Uummannaq

Traditionally, fishers here worked on a dog sled on the sea ice in winter and by boat when the ice melted in the summer. But now, as the ice is melting earlier and becoming less stable, there is a period of several months in the spring when the ice is not strong enough to hold dog sleds but can also not be penetrated by small fishing boats. So fishermen like Maligiak simply can't go out to work.

Local politicians are also concerned about the impact on the people here. Ellen Christoffersen grew up in Uummannaq and until recently, was one of Greenland's three representatives to the Danish Parliament. She said that [climate change](#) is no longer just an abstract issue for Greenlanders, yet there are few programs to help communities adapt.

Some small projects have been launched, but Christoffersen said the world needs to pay more attention to what's happening here. "It would help people here to get financial support in order to develop other areas - especially if the fishermen and hunter would like to choose another way of life."



Ellen Christoffersen says Uummannaq needs financial support
In 2009, the European Parliament banned the trading of seal products produced in or imported to the EU. Christoffersen said that the ban has directly impacted communities like Uummannaq -

preventing it from being able to supplement its income through the sale of seal products. Christensen is seeing the impacts first hand. "We've seen a huge increase in the number of suicides. And some of the suicides I know are related to people not having any money and being ashamed of not being able to take care of their family," she said.

Uncertain future

A recent study by the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found that by September of last year, sea-ice cover had retreated to its lowest levels since the beginning of satellite records.

As Maligiak gets into his fishing boat and prepares to set out for the day, he wonders how his community will be able to deal with this latest threat.

Message from the President of the Métis Nation of Ontario on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

[Canada NewsWire](#)

Dec. 5, 2013



Today I am writing you not only as the President of the Métis Nation of Ontario but also as a son, a husband, a father of a young woman and as a man who wants to end violence against women.

The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada commemorates one of the great tragedies in Canadian history. On December 6, 1989, 14 women at L'École Polytechnique de Montréal were murdered in cold blood for no other reason other than that they were women. Since then December 6 has become a day that all Canadians

can reflect on gender-based violence and ways that communities can take concrete actions to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

While gender-based violence affects everyone, part of the legacy of colonialism is the cycle of intergenerational trauma resulting from systemic abuse that has left generations of Aboriginal women particularly vulnerable to acts of violence and crime. Statistics clearly indicate that Aboriginal women are significantly over-represented as victims of assault, sexual assault, spousal abuse and homicide. Métis, First Nations and Inuit women are three and a half times more likely to experience spousal violence than non-Aboriginal women. The rate of spousal homicide for Aboriginal women is eight times greater than that of non-Aboriginal women. In some northern Ontario communities it is estimated that 75 to 90 percent of women experience violence. These are not numbers. These are our sisters, moms, grandmas, aunties, daughters and granddaughters.

There are over 3000 missing or presumed dead Aboriginal Women across Canada and many communities have walked to bring awareness, to bring change, and to acknowledge and remember these lost women. We have called for action and public inquiries into the murdered and missing Aboriginal women but we still wait for answers.

It is not enough however to wait for others to take action. Accordingly since 2010 the MNO, along with the Ontario Federation Indian Friendship Centres, Ontario Native Women's Association, Chiefs of Ontario, and Independent First Nations, has been part of the Joint Working Group to End Violence Against Aboriginal women. Together we are committed to addressing the root causes of abuse within our Aboriginal communities.

The MNO has also, with funding from the Ministry of the Attorney General, initiated a Victim Services program. This program offers services at 18 MNO offices across Ontario and advocates for victims while also supporting and building violence-free communities. Recently we have secured funding and are working with our partners to address sexual violence and the human trafficking of people with a focus on high-risk areas like Thunder Bay.

While ongoing programs and awareness will help, the responsibility for healing our communities from violence against women lies with all of us. On December 6, 2013, please take time to remember all the victims of gender-based violence and join us in working to end all forms of violence against women.

Thank you, Marsi, Megwetch

Gary Lipinski
President
Métis Nation of Ontario

P.A. Métis Women host Aboriginal AIDS Awareness event

[Prince Albert Daily Herald](#)

December 04, 2013
Jodi Schellenberg



Doris Peltier works on a beaded AIDS awareness ribbon during a sharing circle at Prince Albert Métis Women Association on Wednesday afternoon. The sharing circle was part of the Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week. Herald photo by Jodi Schellenberg



The Prince Albert Metis Women hosted a Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week event on Wednesday, with visitors from the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) in the city to help out.

"What we are doing is a sharing circle and beading," organizer Lindsay Seesequasis said. "It is trying to raise awareness and bring people to see what we have here to offer."

Doris Peltier, CAAN Aboriginal women and leadership co-ordinator, said they invited the P.A. Métis Women to be a partner for the Getting to Zero campaign.

"Prince Albert Métis Women's Association came on board and was our partner on the ground here in Prince Albert to do Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week event specific to women," Peltier said.

She explained that Aboriginal is a blanket term the federal government uses to describe First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.

"This event is a women-specific event and we want to initiate something with our partner on the ground here," Peltier said. "We hope that it will create room for further opportunities to increase the awareness of HIV and AIDS issues with the local population here and to support the work that Prince Albert Métis Women's Association does here locally."

The Getting to Zero campaign was created by the United Nations AIDS organization.

"We decided that we liked that theme and decided to also use the theme," Peltier said. "Under getting to zero, these are the subthemes we need to address in order to get to zero ... No new HIV infections, no discrimination, no AIDS-related deaths."

People are still dying from AIDS-related complications, particularly in the Aboriginal communities, Peltier said.

"There is so much treatment available now for HIV," Peltier said. "People shouldn't be dying still from AIDS-related complications when there is treatment that could prolong people's lives. In some cases, they could regain some quality of life by adhering to treatment for their HIV."

Those diagnosed with HIV and AIDS also face a lot of stigma and discrimination, Peltier said.

"There is a prevailing code of silence in our communities around HIV," Peltier said. "Nobody wants to talk about it and I think we need to talk about it otherwise the numbers are going to continue to increase."

She said many Aboriginal people are afraid to talk about it because through the residential school experience they were taught speaking about sex is taboo.

"That's why there is a code of silence and it is very similar to the residential school experiences and the people who were sexually abused in those schools," Peltier said. "They didn't speak about it for years and years. It took one leader who was the national chief of the assembly of First Nations at the time, he stepped forward and disclosed that he had been sexually molested in residential schools. When he did that in his leadership role, it opened the floodgates and the people started to talk about it.

"So now we are talking about sexual abuse but we need to talk about HIV and AIDS now," Peltier added.

Not only are Aboriginal people facing stigmas about HIV and AIDS, many encounter racism as well when they try to get help, Merv Thomas, director of national programs and communications at CAAN, said.

"One of the biggest barriers our people face in this province I believe is the systemic racism that they continue to face," Thomas said. "That is a big barrier to accessing health."

Thomas grew up in Saskatchewan, but has lived in Vancouver now for a couple of decades.

"As an Aboriginal person, travelling across Canada, one of the biggest things I feel when I come home is I feel that racism -- it is right in your face," he added. "I don't know how to address it. I don't know what is the solution because how can you change the way people were raised and how do you change their perceptions of a people."

He would like to see more Aboriginal people in the health field, helping their brothers and sisters in need.

"There's a lot of positive things happening in this province, I don't want to take that away, but I think there still needs to be a lot of work done," Thomas said. "I think that in terms of the future, Aboriginal people need to take leadership of their own lives. We need to have our own people sitting behind that desk -- people that are welcoming or even there's got to be some cross-cultural teachings."

"I know there is a lot of good in people, in all races and cultures but how do we overcome that systemic racism?" Thomas said. "That is a challenge I want to put out there."

Another problem Prince Albert is facing is the number of cases in the Aboriginal population.

"I know in Saskatchewan, the epidemic is very high and it is having an impact on our Aboriginal population here in Saskatchewan," Peltier said. "That is why I felt it was really important to partner with a group here in Saskatchewan to begin to raise awareness and increase that awareness."

"One of the challenges in this province because it is a hot spot, the numbers are rising for Aboriginal people," Thomas said. "Although the numbers have fallen overall, amongst the Aboriginal people they are skyrocketing. It is a very big concern for us."

The challenge they are now facing is how to educate people and find solutions to problems those diagnosed with HIV and AIDS are dealing with.

"We need to address the stigma and discrimination and it needs to be a community response," Peltier said. "We can't come in from a national level and come into the region and say this is how you do it. That's not our role. Our role is to stand with our brothers and sisters that are working on the front lines and supporting the work they do."

Education is one of the key elements in helping people, they said. Since HIV and AIDS can only be spread through unprotected sex, blood-to-blood contact, such as intravenous drug users sharing needles, and vertical transmission to a fetus, people should not be so afraid of those with the infection.

"There are a lot of people believing in myths and scared to be in the same room as someone with HIV," Peltier said. "Where does that fear come from? Not having the right information or lack of knowledge."

Seesequasis said many people also believe they can not contract HIV or AIDS "because they think it is a gay man's disease."

"We want people to know that everyone is at risk," Seesequasis said. "If you are having sex, if you are doing drugs, you are at risk. It is not just the junkies or whores or gay men this is bothering -- it is bothering everybody."

Testing is also important because many people may not even know they are infected, Peltier said.

It should not just be a bunch of separate entities trying to find solutions -- instead they should try to work together, they all agreed.

"There are pockets of responses and people are unwilling to share information and resources with each other," Peltier said. "That is not going to serve people like myself who are living with HIV. If these pockets of responses do not come together

to respond, then these silos will continue and it doesn't serve the people living with HIV when that response is rolled out that way."

"One of the first things we hear about is the lack of co-operation and collaboration amongst the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups when it shouldn't be that way," Thomas added. "We are all in this together and we all need to share the knowledge with each other. We all need to work and we can't be protective of our (information)."

Working to educate women on HIV and AIDS is very important to Peltier, who was diagnosed HIV positive 13 years ago.

"We are very excited to be partnering with P.A. Métis Women on this event and in particular for me because I hold a national file on aboriginal women living with HIV and AIDS," Peltier said. "This work is very close and dear to my heart."

Although many people are afraid to come forward when diagnosed, Peltier said she felt it was important for her to tell her story to others.

"I am publically disclosed about my HIV status because I think it is important to have champions speaking for those that are not in a place where they can speak about it either due to safety or stigma and discrimination," Peltier said.

Peltier was diagnosed at the AIDS stage in 2000, which happens to many others.

"When I say I was diagnosed at the AIDS stage, that is not a unique situation because many of my Aboriginal sisters, many of them are getting diagnosed late and some at the AIDS stage like myself," Peltier said.

After being diagnosed, Peltier faced a lot of discrimination and stigma about the disease.

"I made a decision right then and there that I wanted to be able to help other people so they wouldn't experience the same stigma and discrimination," Peltier said. "I wanted to be public about the fact that I am HIV positive and let people know these are the underlying issues why our people are vulnerable to HIV."

A lot of Aboriginal people contract HIV after dealing with personal traumas, Peltier said.

"A big underlying issue is the historical trauma of residential schools," Peltier said. "Those are what I would call the ground that set that trajectory for many of our people to have that collision course down the road towards HIV. It made people vulnerable to HIV in trying to deal with trauma."

She explained if trauma is not dealt with properly, people will often turn towards drugs and alcohol.

"I am a recovering drug addict myself and the day I decided to walk away, I just knew I had AIDS and I walked away from that lifestyle at that moment," Peltier said. "I really thank the creator that I was able to walk away and not look back ever again and not every return to that life I was living."

Being HIV positive was a teacher, she said.

"That is what HIV did for me -- I did a complete 180-degree turn and I started walking on a healing path," Peltier said. "I am at a very balanced place now in terms of my own healing. It will be a lifelong journey I'm on now."

"For me HIV was a teacher," Peltier added. "Elders tell us that adversity is a teacher. I took what I could out of it and decided to turn my life around."

Report urges government work with aboriginals

[Baytoday.ca](#)

December 05, 2013, EST.

VANCOUVER - A report commissioned by the federal government in an attempt to resolve an impasse with British Columbia First Nations over energy projects says trust and reconciliation need to be established between aboriginals and governments.

The report by Doug Eyford says most First Nations communities in B.C. and Alberta see the value and economic opportunity in energy developments — but they want that development done in an environmentally sustainable way that acknowledges their rights.

The report says industries understand the necessity of working with aboriginal communities but it believes the federal government must address matters beyond specific projects.

Eyford makes several recommendations, including that Ottawa undertake a "principled" dialogue with First Nations about resource development.

The report also recommends that aboriginal leaders undertake strategic planning helping them take advantage of the employment and business opportunities projects represent.

There are several major energy projects proposed in B.C., including the Northern Gateway pipeline and a proposal by Kinder Morgan to almost triple the capacity of its existing Trans Mountain oil pipeline delivering Alberta oil to B.C. ports for export.

Northwest First Nations Artists Honoured In Vancouver Ceremony

[CFTK-TV Terrace](#)

December 4, 2013

John Crawford

Four northwest artists have returned home from Vancouver, after being honoured for winning this year's B-C Creative Achievement Awards for First Nations Art.

Two Tahltan carvers -- Dale Campbell of Prince Rupert and Ken McNeil of Terrace -- joined Haisla carver Sammy Robinson of Kitamaat Village and Haida cedar-bark weaver Marlene Liddle of Old Massett at the awards ceremony, hosted by the British Columbia Achievement Foundation.

Also honoured were Tlaquaht canoe carver Joe Martin of Tofino and Mandy Brown, a Nlaka'pamux artist from Lytton, who received this year's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Aboriginal Relations Minister John Rustad made the presentations.

----- FROM BC ACHIEVEMENT WEBSITE -----



Sammy Robinson -- Haisla -- *Kitimaat Village*

Sammy Robinson is a Haisla carver from Kitamaat Village on the northwest BC coast. A self-taught artist, he began carving when he was 11 years old, creating wooden toys for Christmas time. He soon turned his attention to Haisla history and culture and began carving in his unique, finely-detailed style, producing pieces in wood, silver and gold. He travels the world sharing his culture and stories, but only sells his work from his carving shop in Kitamaat Village.

Ken McNeil -- Tahltan-Tlingit -- *Terrace*

Over the past 30 years, carving in his Tahltan-Tlingit tradition, Ken has produced an impressive body of work that has been exhibited across Canada, in the US and internationally. A master carver, Ken creates works from miniature to large-scale, from small sculptures to totem poles. He is a founding instructor of the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art at Northwest Community College in Terrace.



Dale Campbell -- Tahltan-Tlingit -- Prince Rupert

Dale Campbell is an internationally recognized carver, known for her masks, plaques and totem poles. As well, a button blanket that Dale designed and constructed was selected for a year-long exhibition entitled "Robes of Power: Totem Poles on Cloth", first shown in Australia. Dale finds much of her inspiration in the myths and legends of her Tahltan and Tlingit people. Dale has added jewellery and glass etching to her practice. Her work has been shown in the Museum of the Northern BC and the Museum of Anthropology and is in collections in North American and abroad.



Marlene Liddle -- Haida -- Massett

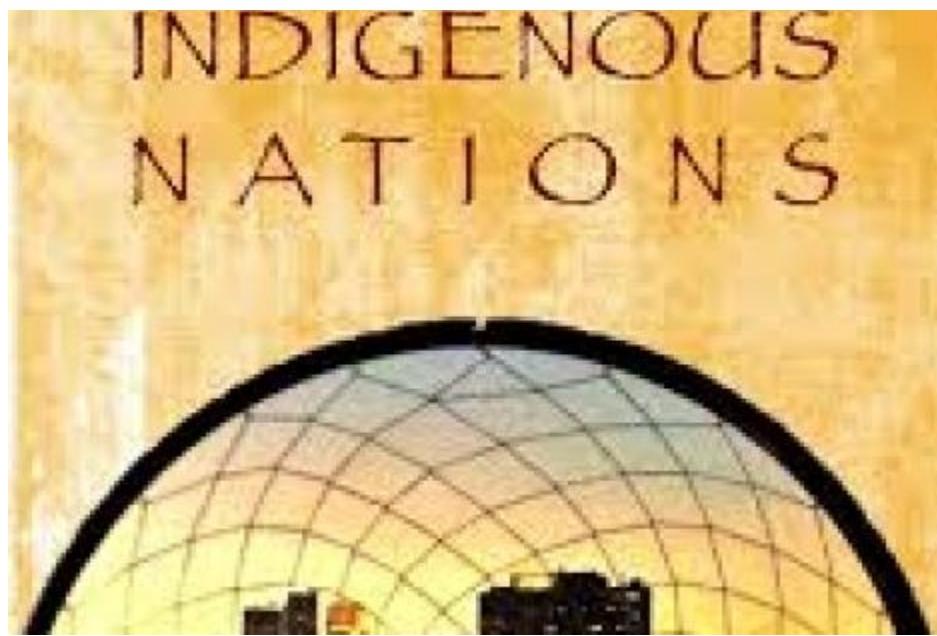
Marlene Liddle has been weaving with cedar bark since 2008, after a lengthy apprenticeship gathering and preparing the red and yellow cedar of Haida Gwaii. Descended from a long line of Haida carvers and weavers, Marlene was mentored by master weaver Christine Carty in the traditional disciplines of cedar bark Haida hats. Marlene now weaves hats in a

contemporary style that incorporates both traditional techniques and modern materials.

New program offering Aboriginal people throughout the region very valuable C.O.I.N.S.

[The Nelson Daily](#)

December 4, 2013
Trail Champion



There's a new and exciting resource available to Aboriginal people throughout the region, according to Kris Taks, executive director of the Circle of Indigenous Nations Society

"The Circle of Indigenous Nations Society (C.O.I.N.S) formed in September 2012 and formally registered as a non-profit society in March 2013," Taks said. "The society is governed by five local Aboriginal Elders living in the Grand Forks, Nelson, Trail, Nakusp, and Castlegar communities.

She said the purpose of the society is to offer cultural programs throughout the region which will support the emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental wellness of Aboriginal children, youth, families and individuals living in the West Kootenay and Boundary areas.

"C.O.I.N.S is currently offering an Aboriginal Mental Health and Addictions program called *Healing Our Spirits* through a two-year contract with the Interior Health Authority," Taks added. "The Healing Our Spirits program provides support to Aboriginal people ages 15 to Elder who are struggling with mental health and addictions issues.

"The service includes offering cultural support/counselling to Aboriginal people, as well as cultural support to Mental Health and Addictions staff who are working with these individuals. The program is also offering a traditional recovery circle called "healing our spirits talking circle" in each of the five communities."

Individuals who would like to learn more about the program can contact:

Nelson Community - Nikki McGinn at 250-304-9308 or
nikki.coinations@gmail.com

Trail and Castlegar Community - Kris Taks at 250-231-4968 or
kris.coinations@gmail.com

Grand Forks Community - Tanis Carson at 250-444-0334 or
tanis.coinations@gmail.com

Nakusp Community – coinations@gmail.com